

Circular Letter No. 21.

September 14, 1912.

To Supervising Principals.

Gentlemen:-

During the school year 1911-12 a total of 185 school conferences were held in the school districts of the island. This was an average of 4.5 conferences per district and the average number of teachers in attendance at each conference was 33.1. From reports submitted we believe these conferences were conducted on the whole with a definite aim in mind, and pedantic discussions where definite conclusions are seldom reached were avoided in favor of subjects dealing with the practical work of the schools.

We believe that these conferences did much to bring about a stronger spirit of cooperation between Supervisors and teachers last year. We believe that organized supervision is necessary for efficiency, and that teachers' meetings, at which the knotty problems of the work can be definitely talked over by Supervisor and teacher, are an essential part of organized supervision. These meetings may take the form of

(1) General Conferences:- At which the general work of the district can be discussed;

(2) Grade Meetings:- At which all the teachers of a

given grade can meet to discuss the work of the particular grade;

(3) Group Meetings:- At which the teachers of adjoining grades (1 and 2 or 2 and 3 for example) can meet to discuss the relations between the grades;

(4) Rural Meetings:- At which the work of the rural school can be discussed by the rural teachers.

Some of these meetings may take the form of round table discussions, doing away with much of the formality usually associated with Teachers' Conferences.

This plan permits the Supervisor to clear up many of the weaknesses observed in the work during his visits to the different schools, and permits more specific directions than is possible in a written suggestion.

Some of the Supervising Principals have followed this plan in the past with excellent results and it is strongly recommended for all the districts of the island.

It is considered advisable that one general conference a term be held in each district at which all the teachers of the district are present, and in order that plans may be made for a General Superintendent or other official of the Department to be present at least one of these conferences, we are taking the liberty of assigning the date for one of them with the time of day A. M. or P. M. affixed to show at what time you may expect the Department official to be present.

It is suggested that:

(1) Two sessions, morning and afternoon, be held at this conference;

(2) The program include at least two model classes, given by strong English graded teachers, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, in the subjects reading, writing or arithmetic;

(3) The part of the program where the help of the General Superintendent will be valuable be placed at the time of day when the General Superintendent will be present;

(4) The rest of the program be arranged, emphasizing some local problem or practical phase of the work where a discussion will be valuable in getting results.

We will ask you to please arrange the program for the designated Conference in your district with the above suggestions in mind and send a copy to the Department at least two weeks before the date set for the Conference.

Sincerely yours,

Commissioner of Education

AdlR